

Blessed PAUL's

Trial and Triumph

IN A

SERMON

Upon the DEATH of

Mrs. ELIZABETH KING.

By JOHN OAKES, Minister of the
Gospel; being the last Funeral Sermon
that ever he Preacht, before Himself
was snatcht away to Glory.

MATTHEW xxiv. 44.

*Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as you
think not, the Son of Man cometh.*

L O N D O N,

Printed by J. Richardson, for Tho. Cockeril, at the Three Legs
in the Poultry, over against the Stocks-Market, 1689.

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Blessed Paul's Tryal and Triumph.

A
Funeral Sermon
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2 TIMOTHY, iv. 7, 8.

I have fought a good Fight, I have finished my Course, I have kept the Faith.

Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the Righteous Judge shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

HOW pertinent and seasonable the Words I have now read, are for the solemn occasion we are met about; is obvious to every Eye; although I must tell you it was not the Object of my own choice, but pitched upon by the Deceased, whose Funeral I am now to Commemorate. My Text is very copious, and of too great an extent

A funeral Sermon.

tent to admit at present of any Preface, or to permit me to give you any account of the Epistle, nor scarce so much time as to cast an Eye upon the Context. Only in a word the time drew nigh when this Blessed Apostle *Paul* was to suffer Martyrdom; and thereby Seal his Testimony to those Gospel Truths, which he had preached and professed; and that by the effusion of his Blood, and the laying down of his Life: The Enemy had got him in their Pound, confin'd him in their Prison; and still he was every day expecting and waiting when the Writ should be sign'd for his Execution, as he tells us, *verse 6. I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.* With this he acquaints *Timothy*, to whom he dedicates this Epistle not by way of Complaint, but by way of Encouragement; he being as ready to be offered up at the Will and Call of God; as they were ready to execute their Rage and Malice against him: Having told us long before, *I am ready not to be bound only, but also to dye at Jerusalem for the Name of the Lord Jesus.* What were the Cordials that supported him in this fainting season, and enabled him to look Death (though presented in a very ghastly dress) in the face with Comfort and Confidence; my Text acquaints you, *I have fought a good fight, &c.* In which words you have these two general parts.

Acts 21. 13.

First, *Paul's Retrospect, viz.* his serious reflection upon the by past Course of his Life; that is, ever since he had properly lived, ever since he had been quickned by the renewing Grace of God's Spirit: For all the time we remain in an unregenerate State is not time lived, but time lost. *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my Course, I have kept the Faith:* This was the report that *Paul's* Well inlightned Conscience made upon this serious review and enquiry: The Reflection upon which fill'd his Heart with Divine Consolation. Before I proceed to the main point I intend, I shall briefly offer two Notes to your serious Consideration.

1. That the apprehension of the near approaches of Death doth ordinarily occasion, nay necessitate Men, whether good or bad to take a strict surveigh of their by past Life; then

Men

A funeral Sermon.

3.

Men think and enquire of themselves what they have been doing; and whether they are going? I say ordinarily it is so: Some indeed are judiciously hardned and given up by God to a blind mind, and to a seared Conscience that they are past feeling: Living and dying like Beasts, without any sight or sense of their Sin here, or their Misery hereafter; whose Eyes are not opened till they drop into Eternal Flames. Except in such a case, not to be mentioned without horror, all Men not accidentally incapacitated by the violence of some bodily Distemper, will at Death be upon a review.

2. Note hence, that according to the report that a well inform'd Conscience gives in at a dying hour, so it will fill and furnish the Soul either with Triumph or Trouble, with Joy or Sorrow: If Conscience well instructed bears Witness for it, that it hath done its work, dispatched the business that God sent it into the World for; then will it be fill'd with Songs in the Night, then will *it lift up its head, knowing the day of its redemption draws nigh.* Then next to Jesus Christ no such Friend as Death: Then will it long to be dissolved to be with Christ. *Our rejoicing is this, the Testimony of our Conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the Grace of God we have had our Conversation in the World.* Self-examination, and serious Reflection is a Duty (though attended with great advantage) that few Men understand, but wholly neglect; or at best are very slight and superficial in the performance of. Most run away with the first over-hasty reports that may be results from a blind carnal sensual heart; taking all things of that Nature upon trust, rather than put themselves to the trouble of a serious Tryal, but this will not alwayes do; when Death hath clapt an Arrest upon thee, and thou seest that thou must in good earnest put thy head into another World; then matters relating to thy self and future state, must pass through a finer sieve, and a more severe scrutiny. Oh that I could more thoroughly perswade my self and all you that hear me this day, to be more frequent and industrious in this matter now, and never leave till the great business betwixt God and our Souls be so thoroughly and comfortably stated; that it may remain

Luke 21. 28.

2 Cor. 1. 12.

A Funeral Sermon.

remain as alasting impression, when all our self-flattering glasses shall be broken in pieces; and all those false measures which we have taken of our Spiritual State shall vanish and disappear. Now may be any thing will stop the Mouth of Conscience, and justifie such a conclusion concerning our welfare, that we are Protestants, that we have been Baptized, that we are Members of this or that particular Church, that we have been just to all, or that we have been injurious to none, that we have been no Persecutors, that we have been charitable to the Poor, that we have kept our Church, that we have said our Prayers; and if after all this we come short of Heaven, then God help us (say some) though all this while totally Strangers to the work of Regeneration and Heart-Renovation. For God's sake Sirs, Consider, and consider it in time; what Christ speaks, *Except your Righteousness shall exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* And in another place, *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a Man be born again, he cannot be the Kingdom of God.* Beloved, I beseech you, see whether that which is sufficient to stop the Mouth of Conscience now whilest you live in this hurry, will make you lie at ease then when you come to a Death-Bed. But I must proceed.

Matth. 5. 20.

John 3. 3.

Secondly, You have the Apostles Prospect, viz. his looking forward, where he opens a fresh Spring, whence he draws his Comfort and Confidence at this time, when he was making his entry into the dark valley of the shades of Death; and then considers what he had in expectation on the other side the Grave. *Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the Righteous Judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.* This was the Joy that was set before the Eye of Paul's Faith. What appeared to his sense must needs be terrible, and terrifying to Nature. Death when it comes clothed with the most desirable Circumstances, must needs make Nature startle at it, Nature will certainly recoil; and as such cannot bid it welcome. No those that seem most to court

A Funeral Sermon.

5

court it, that look and long for it, and with submission to Divine Pleasure have great reason to do so; yet know it is never so for its own sake, but for the sake of something that it is introductive to; as appears from that of the Apostle after he had given testimony of his Faith, both as to the reality of the future state of Felicity, and also of the assurance that he had attained of his personal and particular interest in that state; as you read *2 Cor. 5. 1. For we know that if our Earthly House of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a House not made with Hands, Eternal in the Heavens.* The Considerations of which, together with the present inconvenience, that did attend their present Habitation here below; made them give many a long look, and fetch many a heavy groan to be gone: And no wonder. Which of you that dwell in a pitiful poor mean tottering Cottage, that know not but every day it may drop about your Ears; that were sure that you had a Palace richly furnished for you, that stood ready to receive you, would not do the like? Indeed if you had made no such Provision, but might expect when ever you were turned out, you must lye abroad exposed to Storms and Tempest, no wonder then if you (notwithstanding inconveniences) were loath to depart. Truly the case is much thus betwixt Sinners and Saints, no wonder you that are yet in a state of alienation from God; that would never be perswaded to look after any further nor higher happiness, than what results from a confluence of Creature Enjoyments. I say no wonder that Death coming as a Messenger to call you from hence, to see you cleaving and clinging so fast about the Creature, to find you sending post for this and the tother Physician, and for this and the other Friend; crying out as that young Man once did, when he was grapling with the pangs of Death; *inducias usq; ad mane*, Lord tarry till the Morning: When he knew not whether he was going, but saw he must be exposed to the intolerable, and unavoidable Storms of God's Wrath; but for you Believers, who by an Eye of Faith may see the Heavens opened, and Everlasting Mansions of Glory prepared for you; and an Honourable Convoy sent to conduct you into the blessed Presence of a Recon-

A funeral Sermon:

Reconciled God, it would be a reproach to hang back; yet I observe what the fore-mentioned Apostle takes notice of: That when they came closely to consider the dark and narrow entry of Death, that they were to pass through into the possession of this Land of Light; when they considered the trouble they must be exposed to in their removal from this Tabernacle on Earth, to their glorious Temple in Heaven: It put them to the shrug, and occasion'd a Contest betwixt Flesh and Spirit in this matter, *verse 4. We that are in this Tabernacle do groan being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon; that mortality might be swallowed up of Life.*

There is a double groan that God's people often fetch in this hour, the one of Nature, the other of Grace.

That of Nature arises from the apprehension and fear of approaching Death, together with the afflictive Evils that attend it. The other of Grace, expressive of those earnest desires of that future state of Bliss and Glory, (whereof they are supposed to have some present prelibations) to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is far better, than the best state on Earth. Now when the groans of Grace are louder than the groans of Nature, as sometimes they are; then Death is bid welcom, and they can heartily cry out, as this Gracious Soul did: *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly, and why are thy Chariot wheels so long a coming?*

I know much time, and more than can be allow'd for this exercise, might be spent, and that profitably too in the explication of the Contents of these two Verses: The handling of which would swell rather into a large Treatise, than be confin'd to the limits of a single Sermon. But that I may fulfil the Will of the Deceased, that gave me no liberty to speak to any particular branch of it: but repeated the whole as my subject; and yet not be offensive by too great a prolixity to the Living, I shall with all possible brevity that may be consistent with perspicuity, give you little more than a short Paraphrase upon the whole, waving what ever might be judged ornamental to my Discourse, as not being so seasonable for such a serious Dispensation; where Death and

Eternity

A Funeral Sermon.

7

Eternity are so immediately in view, and we are to look upon each other as passing and posting to Everlasting Mansions.

In the words then consider two more general parts:

First, A Christians Work faithfully perform'd, or a Believers great business, upon which God hath sent him into, and continues him in this World carefully dispatched; and this expressed under several Metaphors relating to *Paul* both as a Christian, in his personal and more private Capacity, and as a Minister of the Gospel in his more publick Capacity, *verse 6. I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.*

Secondly, Here is a comfortable and well-grounded expectation of the promised reward, as consequential upon his finishing his work, and this with a particular application and appropriation to himself; though not without the same security to all others in the like case, and as supposed for the main in the same Spiritual Condition. *Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, &c.*

I shall put both these together into one Doctrine or Proposition, *viz.*

Doct. That all those, and only those who have good evidences of their having done and dispatched their great work and business God hath allotted for them in this World, can with comfort and confidence ensue to themselves the expectation of the promised reward in the other World, at their Death, or day of Retribution.

This is a plain and undoubted Truth, no well-grounded expectation of our Reward till we have first finished our Work. Christ himself who was both a Son and a Servant, sent by his Father into the World; had work appointed him to do, a work of the greatest weight and importance that ever was put into the hands of any to dispatch, the reparation of his Fathers Glory eclipsed by Man's Rebellion and Apostacy, and the Redemption and Salvation of all the Elect depended upon Christ's finishing this work; and a work to be done within a limited time; as may be inferred from what our Saviour speaks. *I must work the works of him that sent me while* John 9. 4.

A funeral Sermon.

it is day; the night cometh when no man can work. A work that had many works in it: Here was doing work, and here was suffering work; and upon his faithful discharge of this great work, a glorious Reward was insured to Christ; and you may observe, that though the work he was engaged in, was difficult and hard, too difficult for all the Angels in Heaven or Creatures on Earth to undertake: In the doing of which he met with inexpressible Discouragements and Oppositions, both from Friends and Enemies: And the reward he expected was a high and glorious reward, such a massy Crown as could fit no Head but Christ's, which might well put him upon earnest longing for it; as you see he did by what the Apostle tells us, *Heb. 12. 2.* speaking of this Blessed Jesus, *Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God.* Yet we never find that either the consideration of the one, the difficulty of his work, or the consideration of the other the beauty and brightness of his reward; did put him upon desiring or expecting the possession of his promised Glory, till he could say he had done his work; and then indeed you will see him addressing his Father in this manner. *I have glorified thee on*

John 17. 4. 5. the Earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do: And now O Father glorify thou me with thine own self, with the Glory which I had with thee before the world was: &c. I have done my work, and I expect my reward.

Truly thus it is in all our cases: That God who hath sent us into the World, and hath appointed our time, and limited our bounds beyond which we cannot pass. This God hath also prescribed our work, what we are to do in this short time allotted for us: He hath not sent us hither only to gaze about us; or to feed and gratify the carnal and sensual inclinations of a corrupt heart, in spending these precious hours in sports and pastimes: No, no, as God hath given us work to do, so he hath furnished us with talents to be improved for the Glory of that God who gave us our beings: He hath committed *Math. 16. 26.* the care of precious Souls, (one of which is more in value than Ten Thousand Worlds) to be recovered out of that lap and lost

A Funeral Sermon.

9

lost Estate into which they are fallen: He hath given his Word for our Direction, hath promised his Spirit for our help; he hath entrusted us with choice advantages and opportunities for the facilitating of what work we have to do: *He hath appointed a day for the calling us to an account, and a* Acts 17. 31. Judge to give forth a Righteous Retribution, according to what we have done in the Flesh, whether it be good or evil: He hath proposed and promised a blessed and glorious Reward; not as merited by our work, but as consequential upon it, a Reward not of Debt but of meer Grace and Favour: He hath threatned an Everlasting Punishment as the demerit of our neglect of that great Salvation set before us: Cutting us off from Heb. 2. 3. all hopes of enjoying the former, and of escaping the latter, without finishing the work he hath given us to do. These things are so evident in Scripture, that you whose lot is cast under the Dispensation of these Divine Revelations cannot plead ignorance; so that if your days be finished, and your work unfinished: Wo be to that Man or Woman, it had been better for them they had never been born.

But on the other side, If we can say with Paul in my Text That we have fought the good fight, and finished our course, &c. Then when Death comes thou mayest entertain it with a smile, and triumph over it; and though it closes thine Eyes, so as to hinder thy beholding of all thy amiable enjoyments here on Earth. Thou shalt see them no more, but must bid adieu to them all for ever. Yet wilt thou then by an Eye of Faith with Stephen, See the Heavens opened, and the Son of Acts 7. 56. Man standing on the right hand of God; ready to receive thee, and bid thee welcom, to that glorious Inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you. 1 Pet. 1. 4.

Having thus for brevity's sake hid led matters together in general; I shall now in order to further instruction reduce the whole under two heads.

I. With respect to the work which we have to do here on Earth: What it is, and how, and when it may be said to be finished.

A Funeral Sermon.

2. Somewhat with respect to the promised reward in Heaven, which follows: What that is, and upon what basis our hopes and expectations of it are bottomed.

In the managing of both these I shall follow the guidance of my Text.

(1.) Then as to the work we have to do in this Life: What it is: I hope I need not mind you, that the work I am speaking to, relates not to the Duties of your particular Callings as Men, and as disposed by the Conduct of Divine Providence into this and that civil and secular Employment, which are many and various, and which are so to be managed as may best subserve your general Calling as Christians. But the work I am to speak to is of a far higher Nature, that which doth not so immediately, nor primarily respect our beings or well-beings with respect to time; as what respects our well-beings to Eternity: A work that hath some resemblance, and bears some parity to the great work that Jesus Christ the Son of God came into the World for; though to be performed in a far different manner. Christ's work was reducible to two general heads.

First, The glorifying of his Father: So you read, *John 17. 4. I have glorified thee on the Earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do; q. d. Father that was the work which thou sentest me into the World for, and that work I have done.*

Secondly, Christ's work was to accomplish the Redemption and Salvation of all God's Elect. This work Christ had upon his hand to do, and he did it: Hence is he by way of Emphasis styled our Redeemer, our Saviour, *Eph. 1. 7. in whom we are said to have redemption; the remission of sins through his blood, according to the riches of his Grace. And so, Heb. 9. 12. Neither by the blood of goats and calves, he entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us; and Heb. 5. 9. Being made perfect, he became the Author of Eternal Salvation unto all them that obey him. This was Christ's work, and this work he finished on Earth; so far as his Father had appointed him to do here.*

A funeral Sermon.

11

Our work comes under the same denomination, and falls under these two heads.

1. Our business is to glorify God. *Whether therefore ye eat or drink or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* It becomes us, every morning when we rise up, to put this Question to our selves, how shall we so fill up this day as that God may have Glory from us? and at night, when we lye down, to ask our own Hearts what glory hath God had from us this day? 1 Cor. 10. 31.

2. Our work lyes in securing our Eternal Salvation. Christs working does not exclude nor excuse our putting our hand to the same work; no, we must work too; though not in the same, but in a far different manner, *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* We work not as Christ did by way of purchase and impetration; Here we can have no hand; But in a way of Application and Appropriation, in which neither can we do any thing as of our selves, but as we are assisted and strengthened by the operations of Gods Spirit. *We are saved by grace through faith, and that not of our selves, it is the gift of God.* Phil. 2. 12, 13. Eph. 2. 8.

Having thus in plain Terms given you an Account of your work in general, I shall speak to it as 'tis metaphorically expressed in my Text. *I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.* This Paul gives us an account of, both with respect to his publick and more private and personal Station, as a Minister and as a Christian. I shall pass by the former in silence, and speak only to the latter. In the words you have comprehended the whole Duty of Man, the sum of the practical part of Christianity; and this under three Metaphors.

1. *I have fought the good Fight:* In which he compares the life of a Christian to a Military or Soldiers life, a continual Warfare.

2. He compares it to the running of a Race, where a price is insured to them who run well.

3. He

3. He compares it to a faithful Repositor or Steward to one that hath somewhat of worth and weight committed to his Trust; of which a good account is to be given. My business is to give you a short Paraphrase of the Christians work, as vail'd under these similitudes.

*Certaena Euan-
gelicū contra
diaboli insidias,
mundi exempla
& carnis illece-
bras. Grotius.*

First, As our Life while here on Earth is expressed by a continued Combate or Warfare; *I have fought a good fight.* A good fight, ingaging in a good cause; and that which if heartily ingaged in is sure to have a good issue and event. Thus the Life of a Christian in Scripture is frequently represented: *2 Cor. 10. 4. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal; but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing which exalts it self against the knowledge of God; and bringing into Captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ.* Hence in the foregoing Epistle, Paul charges Timothy to war a good warfare; Paul had been himself a stout Champion, a courageous Souldier in this Holy War, his life ever since he was brought home to God, and first had taken Arms in this good Cause, had been a continual conflict; many a hot skirmish he had had, many a sharp encounter he had gone through; and possibly many a wound he had received, but he still kept the Field, and had now upon the matter put his Enemies to a perpetual Rout, and was himself going out of the Field, through Christ that strengthened him, *more than Conqueror.* Beloved, how large and copious a Subject I have here before me, I need not tell you, but my time will not allow me. This War my discourse leads me to, is of a far higher Nature, and the success that such who are ingaged in it are concern'd about, is of Everlasting moment. The Enemies we must combat with are utterly implacable: that they will either kill or be killed. No peace not so much as a truce, to be made or indeavour'd with them: *Fight and Live, Yield and Dye,* may well be every Christians Motto, for (says the Apostle) *if ye live after the flesh ye shall dye, but if ye through the Spirit do mortifie the deeds of the body ye shall live.*

Rom. 8. 13.

Here I will only touch upon a few particulars for the further

A Funeral Sermon.

13

ther illustration of these matters, and this in a brief resolution of the following Queries.

1. Whom we are to understand by the Soldiers that are engaged in these Wars against these implacable Enemies; and what Captain or General they fight under. For the Soldiers they are all Believers, such as had been taken Captive, but are supposed to be rescued by the power of Christ the great Redeemer; and being thus rescued in way of Gratitude to this blessed Redeemer, together with an Eye to their own safety, they have devoted themselves to his Service, and under his Banner stand obliged to oppose the World, Flesh and Devil; depending upon him for all their success, as also for the obtaining their blessed Reward, as consequential upon their Conquest. So that these spiritual Souldiers, such as we can heartily bid God speed, and pray for their good Success are all true Believers, who stand devoted to Christ the Captain of their Salvation; all others who remain in their unregenerate state, they are Enemies to Christ and his followers, who have for their General the Devil, whom they follow and for whom they fight against God, against his Spirit, nay War against their own Soul. Some of these Enemies are more secret, and carry on their oppositions against God in a more hidden and cunning way; displaying Gods Colours whilst they are managing the Devils Quarrels. Others are more open and notorious, that declare their Sin as Sodom and hide it not: That set their Mouth against the Heavens; that dare to challenge God to his face. Of this sort are all the openly prophane, Debauched, Atheistical, Idolatrous, Antichristian Crew. These are the *primogeniti diaboli*, and may be called the Devils Auxiliaries. Of these we may say as *Eliphaz* doth of the wicked; *They stretch out their hand against God, and strengthen themselves against the Almighty, they run upon him even on his neck, upon the thick bosses of his Bucklers.* But as many and as mighty as all these be, yet sooner or later they shall all be overcome, and shall yield either to the Scepter of his Grace: O blessed Conquest! or else be broken in pieces by a Rod of Iron. But we are now speaking of such as fight a good fight; that are come on to Gods side, and are engaged for God and Christ,

Heb. 2. 10.

Col. 1. 21.

Acts 5. 3.

1 Pet. 2. 11.

Isa. 3. 9.

Job 13. 25, 26.

Eph. 6. 12.

Christ, against those principalities and powers, and rulers of the darkness of this World. You have heard who the Combatants are.

Psal. 110. 3.

2. In the next place we may enquire when they were first listed, and enroll'd into Christs Army, and became engaged in this Holy Warfare. Why this was not from their first entrance into the World; Alas no! we were all at first on the other side, born Enemies to God, and in condition of Servitude and Bondage to the Devil: All by Nature in a state of Rebellion against God, and Self-destroyers; but we become and were made so by Grace. The time of our first being Listed under Christs Banner takes its Date from our Conversion. When we are brought to a hearty and sincere Closure with and Entertainment of Christ as our Lord and Saviour, as offered to us in and by the Gospel; which is that great instrument by the joyful sound of which Christ by his Ambassadors goes forth and invites and calls poor Sinners off from the Devils Camp, and to yield themselves to him: And when these outward Calls are accompanied by the efficacious workings of Gods Spirit, then Sinners are made willing in the day of Christs power. Christ and his Gospel where they come do not find sinners willing at the first motion to hearken to his Counsel, nor quit their Arms, nor submit to him, but he makes them willing; and from that time of their yielding to Christ, they declare War against the World, the Flesh and the Devil. And these Enemies upon this grow more enraged than before, which young Converts are not so well aware of many times, drawing very uncomfortable and unwarrantable Conclusions against themselves, thinking they are now worse than before, because they find their enemies more busy and enraged than in time past. But remember this the Devil and our Lust are ordinarily most destructive where they are least disturbing. *Whilst the strong man armed keepeth his Palace, his goods are at peace.*

Luk. 11. 21.

3. Enquiry might be made what Enemies the Christian Soldier hath to encounter with? these you know are commonly reduced to three Heads, viz. the Devil, the World, and the Flesh.

A Funeral Sermon.

15

First, The Devil, from whose Tyrannical dominion Believers are enabled to escape. He is our old Adversary, he is call'd *a murderer from the beginning*. Oh the many ways *Joh. 8. 44.* and *stratagems* by which he carries on his pernicious designs *2 Cor. 2. 11.* against poor Souls ! both to retain and hold fast such as *he hath taken in his snare, by whom they are carried captive at his will ;* and that which is most sad, by the consent of their own will too ; and also to reduce and bring back again such as *have fled to Christ for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before them.* *Heb. 6. 18.* Against whom Christians are warned to keep their eye upon, *1 Pet. 5. 8, 9, Be sober, be vigilant ; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist stedfast in the faith.*

Secondly, The World ; Which not as made by God, but as marr'd by Sin, is an inveterate Enemy against the Christian ; which therefore we are caution'd against by no means to give entertainment to in our Affections, *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world ; if any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him.* *1 Joh. 2. 15.* This World is a Witch, a Delilah ; what unspeakable detriment have Christians been expos'd to, when once by her Allurements they have been enticed to take a nap and lay their Heads in the Lap of the Profits, Pleasures or Honours of this World ? What advantage hath Satan hereby taken to cut their Locks, and abate their strength which many times hath scarce been recovered to their dying day!

Thirdly, The flesh, which though mentioned in the last place yet is not the least of those Enemies the Christian hath to encounter with, but rather the worst, and greatest. For what could Satan or the World do without, if it were not for the Flesh within ? By Flesh I mean not the Body, but the remainders of the corrupt Nature, that inward and unseen depravity which like a Leprosie hath over-spread us from head to foot, that body of Sin the blessed Apostle complain'd of ; *which warred against the law of his mind, and brought him into captivity to the Law of sin which was in his Members.* *Rom. 7. 23, 25.* This like a Traytor in a City or Castle is always ready upon every occasion to open the gates and let in the Enemies that lye in siege against it.

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Fourthly,

A funeral Sermon.

Fourthly, We might further enquire what those Weapons are, both Offensive and Defensive, with which Believers must be armed to encounter with these Enemies; and which upon their first listing themselves they are to put on, and so to put on, as never to put them off till they have gained a perfect Conquest: To which I briefly answer, you may find them summed up in one Chapter, where you have the Christians Armory or Magazine; to which the Soul upon its closure with Christ, and first Ingagement must repair; and with which he must furnish himself: Never thinking to encounter these Enemies naked with success; nor with any other Weapons which are not of this make: You have them set down by the Apostle, *Ephes. 6.* from the 11th. to the 18th verse of that Chapter; where we are exhorted, *ver. 11. Put on the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil.* This Counsel is repeated, *ver. 13,* the several pieces of this Spiritual Armour are set down in the following Verses, *viz. 14, 15, 16, 17. The girdle of truth, and the breast-plate of righteousness, the feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace, the Shield of Faith, the Helmet of Salvation, the Sword of the Spirit.* These things I cannot now open, only observe the Title that is put upon them all; they are stiled *the Armour of God*, amongst other reasons for these two to note to us, that they are all of Divine institution, and of divine constitution. All other Weapons which are of Humane make and invention, as I might instance in many; especially such as are fram'd in Antichrist's Forge; How fond soever some are of them, will in these Spiritual Encounters be of no use, nor force. 'Tis not the besprinkling our selves with Holy Water, or signing our selves with the sign of the Cross, that will defend us from, or help us against the assaults of the Devil. These are but wooden Daggers and elder Guns, that will never do execution.

Job 41. 29.

It may be said of the Devil as to all such Weapons, What is said of the Leviathan, such Darts are counted as stubble, and he laughs at the shaking of such Spears.

Fifthly, We should enquire what the cause or controversie is that occasions these continued Combates betwixt the Believer

liever and these Spiritual Enemies? Why, it is whether the Christian should remain and persevere in further subjection to God and Christ, to whom he hath devoted himself, and who is his rightful Lord and Sovereign; and on whom depend all his present comforts and future hopes: Or whether he should basely and treacherously revolt and return to his former bondage and slavery to his Temporal and Eternal Ruine. This my Brethren is the plain case, this is their design they aim at, nothing short of this will put an end to this Controversie to the contentment of thy Adversaries; and in this is it thy concern to oppose them to the utmost.

Sixthly, We might yet further enquire, what those Victories are which the Christian Combatant obtains against these Enemies?

These are of two sorts:

1. Such as are inchoate, particular Conquests, in particular cases, and particular conflicts with this or that single temptation or corruption: And these are temporary; upon which the Enemy is put upon retreat, and withdrawing for a season; though they quickly rally again; and many times make fiercer onsets than before: As Christians find by frequent experience. Thus he dealt with our Blessed Saviour; in that single combat which he was permitted to engage in with the Captain of our Salvation as it were hand to hand. 'Tis said he was led up of the Spirit into the Wilderness to be tempted of the Devil. After this bold encounter, 'tis said, *verse 11. Then the Devil leaveth him:* But how long, not for ever: No the Evangelist Luke tells us, *He departed from him for a season.* Though our Saviour had the Victory, yet was he not quite routed, but returned again, though not in the like manner.

Matth. 4. 1.

Luke 4. 13.

2. Therefore there is a Conquest that the Christian shall at length get over those Enemies, that shall be compleat and consummate: But this is not to be expected till the Christian can say with Paul, *The time of my departure is at hand.* This Conquest Paul had now in prospect by an Eye of Faith; then when Death comes, Christ leads them out of the Field more than Conquerours; where they shall be out of their reach,

A Funeral Sermon.

they shall sin no more, nor be tempted any more; but all tears shall be wiped from their Eyes, and Everlasting Joy shall be upon their Heads, and Sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Thus have I briefly run over the first Metaphor by which the Christians work is expressed.

Secondly, Another Metaphor by which the same thing is denoted: The Christians work is compared to the running of a race: *I have finished my course*, saith Paul. Many a weary step he had taken, so it was and might be accounted considering the many incumbrances he was laden with, and the many difficulties as to the Flesh he was exposed to. Otherwise *Wisdoms wayes are wayes of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace*. Many a Temptation to turn aside, or go back, many a rub and difficulty to get over Paul had doubtless met with; but now he was come to the last stage, and almost to the end of that too; he was just ready to receive his Garland. A few steps more and he should enter upon his Everlasting rest: *I have* (saith he) *finished my course*, got to the end of my race.

A Christians Life is often in Scripture compared to the running of a Race, 1 Cor. 9. 24. *Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth; the prize so run that ye may obtain*: And elsewhere the Apostle speaking to some who had espoused the Faith of the Gospel, and were now in danger of declining from the Truths they had embraced. He gives them this admonition: *To did run well, who did binder you that ye should not obey the truth*: And so in Heb. 12. 1. *Let us run with patience the race that is set before us*. If you should ask me where in the Life of Christianity is like the running of a Race: I answer briefly in a few particulars, though many others might be mentioned.

First, In the running of a Race: Care must be taken that the persons that run start fair, I mean not together; but that they begin at a right place appointed by him who hath the ordering of that affair. Now to accommodate this to a Christian Race; this must always take its rise from the Souls sincere closing with Christ by Faith; before a Sinners sound Conversion to God by Christ, he cannot run right: There are some, I fear too many that observe not this order; but
all

all on a sudden will jump (as it were) into a profession of Religion, and appear very forward and zealous; and seem to out-strip a great many sound Christians: But, alas! For want of setting out right, not laying their building upon the true basis, viz. *Repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*; They soon tire and turn aside; and though they seem to begin in the Spirit, they take up and end in the flesh; and all their goodness (like Ephraims) proves like the morning dew, and the early cloud that soon passeth away. This, this is one of the great grounds of Apostacy; of which this Age affords too many instances. You young ones that begin to favour the things of God, remember this; trouble not your Heads with Controversies and Disputable Points, at least till you have well studied, and are thoroughly versed in the great and necessary, and with all plain Doctrines of Faith and Repentance, the two Essentials of sound Conversion.

2. The running of a Race is a regular Motion: It is not a running any where backward or forward; but a keeping to those Rules and Limits that are prescribed by him or them that have the ordering of it. Religion is not a wild disorderly, extravagant, fanciful thing; but a walking by rule, and that by a right rule that is prescribed by God's word: *As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.* And says David, *I will run the wayes of thy Commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart*: Some have been and are yet upon the run, (God stop them) that run from God and Christ, and Salvation, and run to the Devil, and post to the bottomless pit; as if it were with them, as with the Swine when possessed by the Devil; who are said to run violently down a steep place into the Sea, and perish in the waters. The Psalmist tells us, (and I think many in this Nation have given us sad proof of it :) *Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another God.* Blessed be God we have seen the accomplishment of the former, as well as the latter; these are sad Races: But by what Rules were they acted? No other, no better than the Lusts, and cursed Imaginations of their own Hearts: But such as run the Christian Race must observe God's Word for their Guide: Thus David, *Thy word*

Afts 20. 21.

Hof. 6. 4.

Gal. 6. 16.

Psal. 119. 32.

Math. 8. 32.

Psal. 16. 4.

Psal. 119. 105.

A Funeral Sermon.

is a light to my feet, and a lamp to my paths. 'Tis not the decrees of Popes, nor Canons of Councils, nor sayings of Fathers, but God's Word that in this Race is to be our Guide. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory.

Thirdly, The running of a Race is a progressive motion. It is not the running in a round, but a going forward, *Phil. 3. 13, 14.* Brethren I count not my self to have apprehended; but this one thing I do forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before; I press towards the mark, for the prize of the high Calling of God in Christ Jesus. This speaks the Christians dayly endeavour; to grow in Grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. There must be a going from strength to strength, a striving to get more of God, and do more for God. Here must be no standing still, nor much less any turning aside, or going back. O Christians! How earnest had we all need be in our pleadings with God, that he would heal our backslidings, and accomplish that gracious Promise; *The Righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.*

Fourthly, Running of a Race is a painful motion; there is and must be a putting forth all the strength a Man hath. So my Friends the performance of the Duties of Christianity is no easie thing to Flesh and Blood: No room for Spiritual sloth, and laziness. The way in Heavens road is up hill, and most what rough and uneasie way to the Flesh; and such as move in it, must expect to meet with difficulties; which considering the clogs that hang about us, the Sin that so easily besets us, will require our utmost strength; and to send up loud cries to Heaven for dayly supplies: As *David, Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.* How miserably are they mistaken, that conceit it is an easie matter to be a Christian, or to live a Christians Life.

Fifthly, The running of a Race is adjudged to be a constant, continued, and persevering motion without stop or stay till we come to the end. So Beloved, Christianity will find the Christian work every day.

Here-

Herein do I exercise my self to have always a Conscience void of offence towards God, and towards Men. He doth not say I have done, or I will do; no 'tis a work alwayes a doing. You have work not only for the Lord's day, when you have more immediately to do with God, but on the week dayes. Your Religion is not then to be laid aside; as if all your Devotion was to be left at Church, and as if you were obliged to serve God only one day in, and the Devil and the Flesh all the week after. This speaks that 'tis not enough to be Religious now and then in a good mood, or for a spurt and away; to take a few steps where the way is smooth and fair: No there must be a going through thick and thin: *Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doth righteousness at all times: He that endures to the end shall be saved.*

Psal. 106. 3.

Matth. 24. 13.

Quest. But here an enquiry may be made: How *Paul* could say he had finished his course, before he had finished his days? 'Tis apparent that his Glass was not yet run, and so his Work was not yet done, he had a dark and thorny Stage to pass through yet, in which he had at present taken but a few steps.

Resol. 1. To this I answer, First Negatively, That if you take it in a plain literal sence, no Christian can be said to have finished his Course till he have finished his Breath and Life: The whole Day, the Evening, as well as the Noon and Morning, are appointed all for Work: Indeed when the Night comes, our working time is over.

Resol. 2. But yet Secondly Affirmatively: A Believer may be said to have finished his Work; as it is his sincere purpose and firm resolution not to give over till he hath finished it; as God through his Grace is ready to account that to be done, which the gracious Soul purposes and resolves through Divine Assistance to do: Thus some resolve the same Question referring to Christ, saying, *I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.* How could this be, when as yet the bitterest part of that Cup his Father had given him to drink was yet behind? To resolve this, *Augustine* puts the Præterperfect Tense into the Future Tense. I have finished it, viz. I will finish it.

John 17. 4.

But lastly the best resolution of this concerning Christ, and *Paul's* saying he had finished his Course; as thereby expressing their

A Funeral Sermon.

their readines as well as resolvednes to finish and consummate the Work they had gone on in so far : *I have finished my Course ; q. d.* my time is just now at a period : I am now entering upon the last Stage a few more steps to take, and all is over : A few moments will perfect all , he lived in the view of Death which he saw was at the door, which would put a *Finis* to all.

Thirdly, I proceed now to the third and last Metaphor ; by which a Christians Life is represented ; alluding to the Duty of a faithful Steward, who having somewhat of weight and worth committed to his Trust , is careful not to lose nor embezzle it ; but preserve it for the use of the Owner without damage or detriment : Thus saith *Paul, I have kept the Faith.* Here I shall touch only upon two things.

1. What was this Treasure, this Trust, that is supposed to be committed to *Paul's* care? *The Faith.*

2. How *Paul*, or any true Christian may be said to keep this depositum, this Faith? *I have kept the Faith.*

First, What this Faith is?

Faith is chiefly to be consider'd under one of these two Heads.

1. Either the Grace of Faith ; that Grace whereby through the operation of the Spirit of God, we come to be united to Christ, and interested in him, and all the benefits and blessings that he hath purchased, called *precious Faith*, the *Faith of God's Elect*, as peculiar to God's chosen ones : This is committed to Christians by way of operation and infusion, and donation : *By Grace ye are saved through Faith, and that not of your selves, it is the gift of God.*

2. By Faith we are to understand the Doctrine of Faith ; the revelation of the Divine Will in the Gospel of God's Grace, which was committed to *Paul* as a Minister to be by him dispensed and preached to others ; as being *the power of God unto salvation* : And elsewhere he tells us that Christ hath committed unto us the word of *Reconciliation* : And this is also a trust committed unto all Christians ; to be professed , owned, obeyed, believed, against all gainfayers whosoever, whether they be Men of unsound Minds, or ungodly Livers :

Which

2 Pet. 1. 1.

Tit. 1. 1.

Rom. 1. 16.

2 Cor. 5. 19.

Which some professing have erred concerning the Faith. This is 1 Tim. 6. 21. that Faith which we are exhorted, earnestly to contend for, which Jude 3. was once delivered to the Saints.

Secondly, What is meant by his keeping the Faith? To which I answer,

1. If you take it in the former sense, then it imports his constant endeavour to keep that Grace in its exercise, by a constant cleaving to, and reliance upon God and Christ for Life and Salvation, drawing continued supplies of his Grace and Spirit, for the enabling a Christian to do his present work, and to fit him for his future reward; and this against all the opposition that he may meet with, from the lie and subtle suggestions and insinuations of the Devil, who hath a special sight at the Christians Faith.

2. But if you take it in the latter sense, then it imports the holding fast our profession of this both in our principles, and practices, against all attempts of Seducers and Persecutors, and against all the enticing and alluring examples of profane and ungodly ones: Such there have been, and never more than in this loose and ungodly Age in which we live: *When Iniquity abounds, and the Love of many waxes cold: When* Matth. 24. 12. *there are great endeavours to laugh all true Religion, and Godliness in its power out of countenance, and various stratagems to induce Christians to make shipwreck of Faith and a good* 1 Tim. 1. 19. *Conscience.*

Thus have I given you a short account of the first part of my Text, as expressive of the true Christians work; a work to be done here.

I proceed now very briefly to *Paul's* prospect what he had in view hereafter, relating to the Glorious Reward he was upon the matter entering into the possession of.

Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness: I purpose only to note a very few things, and shut up the whole with a short Application.

* First, Here we have an account of that future felicity, which is reserved for the Saints; 'tis a *Crown*, and a *Crown of Righteousness*: A *Crown*, which you know, is an Ensign of the greatest Honour upon Earth, and an Emblem of the highest
D Glory

A Funeral Sermon.

Glory in Heaven. Such a Crown, and such a Kingdom, as infinitely exceeds all the Crowns and Kingdoms of the World;

- 1 Cor. 9. 25. 'tis an *Incorruptible* Crown; a Crown, *which fadeth not away*; whereas all the Crowns of Kings and Emperours, which are so eagerly contended for by the Men of this World, are poor, perishing, corrupting, fading things. 'Tis a *Crown of Life*. What shall I say? 'Tis not only a Glorious Crown, but a Crown of Glory.

Secondly, 'Tis a Crown of *Righteousness*; as peculiarly belonging to those, who are clothed with the Robe of Christ's Righteousness imputed, and with the fine Linnen of the Righteousness of Christ imparted: And also, as a Righteous, but yet free Reward, which the Righteous God hath promised, and will faithfully perform.

2. We may observe here the *time* of Believers entring upon the possession of this future Glory.

1. In part, as to their Souls: *Henceforth*; that is immediately upon their Death and Dissolution. *Blessed are the dead which dye in the Lord, from henceforth*; yea saith the Spirit, *that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them*; So Paul; *Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ*. In the same moment, wherein they pass from Earth, they go to Heaven; there is no calling in at Purgatory by the way; no middle state to detain the Souls of Believers in.

2. Perfectly and compleatly, with respect to Soul and Body at a certain day; the day of Judgment, which will be a day of Retribution, which is called by way of emphasis in the Text, *That Day*. A remarkable day it will be, when the whole World shall be determined and sent to their Everlasting abodes, either of Happiness on the one side, or Misery on the other.

Thirdly, We may observe the *manner* of the Saints entring upon this Glorious Possession; not as matter of merit, but by way of free donation; *which God the righteous Judge shall give me*; says Paul here. Eternal Life cost Christ very dear, (no less than his Life-Blood) but it comes free to us, without price or purchase on our part. 'Tis not our deserved Wages, but the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Rom. 6. 23.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, We have here the *Extent* of this Gift, not only to such as *Paul*, a Believer of the highest Fourm, a Star of the first Magnitude in the Firmament of the Church, (*not to me only, &c.*) but to every true, though weak Believer; to all who can approve themselves such as love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, and look and long for his appearing. It was not the peculiar privilege of this great Apostle, but a *common Salvation*, which belongs to all the faithful, from the greatest to the least of Saints. And thus I have dispatcht the Doctrinal part of this Text, I shall only add a word or two for the practical improvement of it.

First, If they, and only they, who have good evidence of having done and dispatcht their great Work and Business in this World, can with comfort and confidence ensure to themselves the expectation of the promised Reward in the other: Then hence we may infer the madness and folly of a great part of those that hear me this day: Who have been so often told of this Future State, and profess to believe it, and by dayly renewed instances of Mortality cannot but be convinced, that they are drawing near to it, and perhaps may be upon the very brink of it, not knowing what a day or night may bring forth, and yet they have lived all their days in a total neglect of that work, whose accomplishment is a necessary prerequisite to this promised Reward: Who are so far from having conquered their Enemies, and fought the good fight, that they have not yet really *list*ed themselves under Christ's Banner, who are still Servants of Sin, and Slaves of the Devil, and Strangers and *Enemies* to Christ; who are found fighting indeed, but whom or what do they fight for? They are *fighters against God*, *resisters of the Spirit*, striving against the Counsels of God's Word, and the Motions of his Grace, and resolv'd to maintain and defend their Lusts. Poor, wretched Souls! Can you think to live here always? Or, that your Houses shall continue for ever? Do you never expect to dye? Or is it indifferent with you, where Death will set you, in Heaven or in Hell? The Lord so awaken you, that you may give no sleep to your Eyes, nor rest to your Souls, till you come in at the sound of the Gospel.

A funeral Sermon.

Trumpet. You who have not taken one *step* in this Christian Race; who are running indeed, but whither (I beseech you) so fast? You are *running from God*, with your Faces towards Hell, and your Backs upon Heaven; and there is no stopping you (as yet) in this cursed Race; Ministers call after you; God calls, and holds out a Crown to you, invites and intreats you to consider your wayes, and turn your feet unro his Testimonies. You, who are so far from keeping the Faith, that you are Strangers to any such Work and Gift; you have *none in truth* to keep: You may have and make a profession, but it is so weakly bottomed, so little understood, and you are so unable to give a reason of it, that you are ready to part with it, when the next temptation assaults you. The Lord give you to believe, and put the Spirit of Faith within you, before it be too late to cure your Infidelity, and you perish from the way.

Secondly, Improve this, Oh you Christians, who are Christians indeed, for your encouragement in your Work and Way. You, who have *enter'd the Lists*, and are *engaged* in this *Holy War*; let what you have heard this day, strengthen you in your Conflicts. It is true, God hath cast your Lot in an evil day, in which all your Enemies, the World, Flesh and Devil are coming forth full of rage and fury, and you may expect a terrible shock; but let me beseech you to *endure hardness, as good Soldiers of Jesus Christ*. Still think, that you hear Christ calling to you, *Be of good cheer, I have overcome the World*; I may add, and the God of the World too. You must combat still, but remember, 'tis with *conquered Enemies*. You have indeed *rough wayes* to run your Race in, but there is a *Glorious prize* before you; *Be not weary of well-doing, for in due season you shall reap, if you faint not*.

There are, 'tis true, many Spoilers abroad, who would not only rob and deprive you of your Estates and Lives, but of your Souls and Religion, and tempt you to serve other Gods, which you have not known; but, bear up Christians against them; *Yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry*. To conclude, hearken diligently to

what

2 Tim. 2. 3.

John 16. 33.

Gal. 6. 9.

Heb. 10. 37.

what your Lord says, *Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy Crown.* Revel. 3. 11.

Having thus finish'd what I intended from the Text it self, I shall now take leave to begin another Subject; which shall be a just and faithful account of this precious Saint and Servant of God, lately deceased; Mrs. *Elizabeth King*, who having fill'd up the number of *Thirteen Years* the last day of the last Month, was on the Seventeenth day of this, removed by a very Triumphant Death out of the present World into a better, to the great grief not only of her Parents (who are most immediately and especially concerned in the loss) but also of all those who had convers'd with her, and seen or heard of that Blessed frame which she was in at her departure hence; I say, to their *great grief*, tho' mixed with *great joy*, the pulling down of her Earthly House, being like the laying of the Foundation of the second Temple, which occasioned both *loud shouting* and *weeping* too. I have a Theam before me, which might well employ the Tongue or Pen of the greatest Oratour, enough to strike the Hearers with wonder; but, at what? Not a poor empty Creature, (which is nothing, or worse than nothing of it self) but the rich and powerful Grace of God, which hath been so conspicuous in so *young a Child*, as may well be usher'd in with a [Behold], and command both your quickest attention, and highest admiration. To say nothing of her Ancestors, (the *worthy Grandfathers* on both sides, who *yet speak*, though dead many years since, and from whose *Prayers*, while alive, she may be justly supposed to have received some benefit) nor of her Parentage, nor Education, I shall confine my self to the recital of some passages, which dropt as Honey from her Lips, upon her Death-Bed; and especially on the day before her translation into Heaven. The warning which God gave her to get ready for her change, was short, though she was apprehensive (as she afterwards declared) as soon as God laid his Hand upon her, that the stroke would be mortal. The Messenger which her Heavenly Father sent (I mean

A funeral Sermon.

Dr. W. Gough
in his Life.

Pfal. 39. 9.
Ila. 53. 7.

mean the Distemper, wherewith she was at first seized) had *Eſau's hand*, and handled her roughly; she was taken on the Lords day at night, or early in the next morning of that week in which she dyed, with extream tormenting pains, and though she wanted no Humane help, it prov'd all but vain; and under such a racking exercise (notwithstanding a very diligent application of means) she continued till the *Fryday* morning following; during which time, though she could not forbear to *groan*, she was never heard to *grumble*; (as was said of her *Great Grandfather*, whose name is famous in the Church of God) she never uttered one mutinous or discontented word, but shewed a mighty subjection of Soul to Gods mighty hand, and opened not her mouth, so as to charge Him foolishly; she was *dumb*, because God did it, like *David*, yea like Christ Himself, the unparalleld example of Divine Patience and Meekness.

On the *Fryday* morning before mentioned, whether her pains were more mitigated, or Nature more spent, Grace begun more signally to discover it self: Her Parents being then present, found her in such Heavenly raptures, and so refreshed with the prelibations and foretastes of that Glory which she was going to, that it filled them with astonishment; for at that time God began to give a remarkable answer to their Prayers, which were, that if He did call her hence by this visitation (though that was earnestly deprecated with submission to His Sovereign Pleasure) she might leave behind such plain and manifest proofs of her eternal well-being, as might enable them to stand under that almost insupportable burden; to these Prayers God was pleased to say, *Amen*; for though they had very good and justifiable hopes from those Testimonies, which she had given them in the time of her former Life, yet now her expressions and behaviour a little before her Death were so much more satisfactory, that they left no room for the least doubt or suspicion of her Blessedness. Her Mother putting it to her, whether she remembred any particular time, when God first wrought upon her, she answered, *No, but God had begun to work*

work upon her, almost as soon as she had a Being, or at least, as soon as she was come to the use of Reason; only she recollected, that she had some remarkable impressions made by the Spirit, at the hearing of a Sermon repeated from these words, *Now we are the Sons of God, but it doth not yet appear, what we shall be*; and another time, at the hearing of a Sermon preached upon the Glory of the Gospel, from that Text, *In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the Glorious Gospel, &c.* When I came to her that morning before she dyed, (being sent for, at her urgent request) she desired me to Preach her Funeral Sermon, upon the subject which you have heard, readily repeating both the verses without any hesitation; adding, that she desir'd it, not upon her own account, but for the sake of Religion; that the world might be convinced there was somewhat in that (how much soever despised) which would bear up the heart in a dying hour. With great gravity she exhorted me to go on and Preach the Gospel, praying, that my Ministry might not be in vain; whereupon telling her, that I hop'd, it had not been in vain to her, she with much heartiness replied, *No, I bless God it hath not.* Another Neighbouring Minister, being call'd in the same morning to her, (at her request) when he first came, and askt her how she did, she chearfully answered, *very well*; how can I be better? for I am going to my Heavenly Father. He then asking her, whether she was willing to leave this World, she replied, *Yes, most willing, for why should I desire to live any longer in it?* He telling her, that she had now a great work to do, she answered, *Yes, but I bless God, I am prepared for it, and I fear not Death, for Christ by his Blood hath taken out the sting.* The question being propos'd to her, whether she would have him to pray with her, she said, *Yes, I would have you to pray, that God would continue to lift up the light of his countenance upon me to the last, as he does now.* And before he came away from her, she prayed, that the Lord would be with him, and help him to preach so, as that the World might have no occasion to jeer at Religion. She was much concerned for the Publick, and in her

1 John 3. 2.

2 Cor. 4. 4.

A Funeral Sermon.

her Addresſes and Ejaculations to God forgot not to mention Zion; but prayed for the downfal of thoſe three Enemies of the Church, the Turk, Antichriſt, and Satan. And as to her ſelf, ſhe prayed ſometimes in theſe words, Lord, chaſe away the Tempter, and ſuffer him not to darken my evidences now: And again ſhe prayed, That when he came to her as he did to Chriſt, he might find nothing in her.

When ſhe was ſpeaking of the ſenſible decays of her Body, and near approaches to the Grave, ſhe ſaid, *I feel my ſelf as it were, like the Sun, going down into another World.* And when ſome drink was offered her, ſhe cryed, *I ſhall ſoon have done eating and drinking here, but am going to drink new Wine with Chriſt in my Fathers Kingdom.* Her want of Sleep being ſpoken of by a ſtander by, ſhe ſaid, *In a little while I ſhall ſleep in the Lord, which is better than any I can take here.* When the ſharpneſs and violence of her pains was mentioned, ſhe ſaid, that indeed ſhe could never have been able to endure them, if God had not ſtrengthened her, and given in ſuch extraordinary comforts to her; for ſhe was never ſo ſenſible of his love, as when ſhe was in the greateſt miſery. And then ſhe added, *But alas! what are my pains in compariſon of what my dear Saviour underwent, when he ſweat drops of Blood for my ſins?* Some weeping loud in the room, ſhe beg'd them to forbear, ſaying, *Why ſhould you cry for ſuch a lump of dirt? It will do me no good, but make me dye the harder, and I count it rather an Argument of hatred, than of love to me.* When one ſpoke in her hearing of the troubles of the times, ſhe ſaid, *God is hiding me in the hollow of his Hand, from the Beſom of Deſtruction, which may be coming.*

She very largely expreſs her earneſtneſs to be diſſolved; at ſeveral times, and more eſpecially, when ſhe found that her Death was deferred longer, than ſhe had ſuppoſed it would be; ſhe cryed out, *I have taſted ſo much of the Joys of Heaven, that I loath the Earth: What ſhould I do in this Dunghil World, where I hear the Name of my God ſo often blaſphemed? I am weary of it, my Heart is ready to break, becauſe I may not go home to my Father.* Oh! to have ſuch a ſenſe of

the Love of God, and then be put back again! I cannot bear it. I am sure I shall go to Heaven: I wish that I might go quickly. I shall never enjoy my self till I am there. One askt her whether if she might recover, she could be willing to return again into this World; and she answered with some vehemency, *No.* Yet notwithstanding all this, she was not irregularly impatient to be gone, as appeared by that passage, *The Lord look upon me, and enable me to wait his time.* She mingled the Praises of God with her Prayers to him, and was heard sometimes to utter those words, *Grace, Grace.*

She gave very serious Counsels to those that came to see her, and stood about her; she spoke to her Brother and Sisters in a way suitable to their Capacities, and amongst other things, strictly caution'd them against the Sin of Lying, and advised them to be very dutiful and good Children to their Father and Mother, and to love us Brethren and Sisters. Taking her leave of one, whom she blest God for, as an Instrument of bringing her to the Knowledge of God in her tender years; *She said I am going from you now, but hope to meet you again hereafter in Heaven.* (And to the same purpose she spoke to some others, of whose good Estate she was persuaded.) To another she said, *Be sure above all things to get an interest in Christ; for this is all which we have to do in this World.* She counselled and intreated all, to walk as becomes the Gospel, that they might not dishonour God, nor provoke him to take the Gospel from them. Her Mother asking her, what she had to say to her, she answered, *I pray God to support you, and I hope, he will be your everlasting support.* She had always carryed her self so well towards her Parents, that she was able with a good Conscience to tell her Father in this sickness, *that she had never wilfully offended him in her whole Life.* She was very conscientious in observing of the Lords Day; and those parts of it, which were not taken up in publick, or in Family-Worship, she spent in her own private Retirements, the Fruit whereof abundantly appeared. She had made her Bible her dayly delightful Companion for such a considerable time, and profited so much in it, that she could

A funeral Sermon.

recite great part of it; and in that last day of her Life, she brought forth many very pertinent Texts out of *her good Treasure*, which she had laid up; for she then said indeed, *I shall carry the Bible to Heaven in my Heart, though I cannot carry it in my hand.* Some of her last words, before her sorrowing Parents left her, were these, *The Lord gives, and the Lord takes: And, Oh Death where is thy sting!* Thus this Holy Child of God on the Saturday Morning, (Five dayes after the fatal Arrest) joyfully finished her Course, and put off Mortality.

I would make a little Application of this.

First, To you, who are Godly Parents. Let this both quicken and encourage you to *Family Instruction*, and to give your Children *Religious Education*: To which purpose let me
 Ecclef. 11. 6. use those words of Solomon, *In the Morning sow thy seed, and in the Evening withhold not thy hand, for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.*

Secondly, To Children. Let this instance put you upon
 Ecclef. 12. 1. *Remembering God, your Creator in the days of your youth.* You see, that Death does often knock early at the doors of young ones; and blessed are they, who when God comes, shall be found ready.

Thirdly, To All. That though we have heard, how Heaven hath one Saint more, we may labour that Earth may not have one less; but (if it be the Will of God) this breach may be made up amongst us, by this Discourse bringing home one Soul (at least) to God.

THE END.